

SITUATION REPORT NO. 13
INCIDENT NO. 97-003
DATE: January 24, 1997 TIME: 12:00 p.m.

TO: Governor Edward T. Schafer
State Capitol
Bismarck, ND 58505

1. NATURE OF DISASTER: Winter storms and blizzard conditions statewide.
2. DEATH AND INJURIES: A motorist received a serious back injury and eight people suffered minor injuries during a six-car pile up on I-94 near the North Dakota Winter Show Building in Valley City, Barnes County. Snow fog contributed to the accident, which occurred January 23. Traffic was temporarily rerouted from I-94 through Valley City.
3. DAMAGES: The National Weather Service predicts North Dakota will plummet into another deep freeze on January 24 as Arctic air sweeps through the state, bringing dangerous wind chills of 50 to 55 below. The forecast calls for blizzard conditions in eastern North Dakota, where blowing and drifting snow are likely. This storm will exacerbate existing problems created by the winter storms. The National Weather Service predicts roads could become blocked by snow drifts.

Snow removal efforts have received another setback as January 22 blizzard conditions blocked emergency access on many roads in eastern North Dakota, which had previously been cleared. For example, Grand Forks County had access to all residents; however, blizzard conditions reduced access to only 5 percent of the roads.

A tractor-trailer traveling too fast for road conditions slammed into the rear of a 1,500-gallon propane delivery truck on January 23, forcing the truck into the ditch on I-94 near Jamestown. During the off loading process, the delivery truck caught fire, temporarily shutting down the interstate between exits 256 and 258. Traffic was diverted from the interstate to a frontage road for six hours while emergency responders battled the fire. No one was injured in the incident. Snow fog contributed to the accident.

Blizzard conditions delayed by one day the opening of the Disaster Field Office (DFO) operated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The delivery truck transporting computers was delayed in Fargo when the January 22 blizzard closed the interstate system for six hours. The DFO, located at 600 South Second Street, Bismarck, will open at noon January 24. The telephone number is (701) 221-7700.

The State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) received an additional report of a vehicle accident related to January 22 blizzard conditions. Two tractor-trailers collided on N.D. Highway 200, west of Cooperstown, in Griggs County, blocking traffic for approximately three hours.

A tractor-trailer traveling west on N.D. Highway 46 struck a stalled, abandoned vehicle on January 22. The Ransom County Sheriff's Office assisted 10 stranded motorists, whose vehicles had been stuck in the snow. No injuries were reported.

4. RESOURCES COMMITTED:

LOCAL: No change from previous reports.

STATE: No change from previous reports.

FEDERAL: No change from previous reports.

5. VOLUNTEER ACTIONS: No change from previous reports.

6. MAJOR ACTIONS: Roger Free, FEMA's Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO), arrived in Bismarck on January 23 to negotiate the FEMA-State agreement with Governor Schafer. The FEMA-State agreement defines the scope of work and reimbursement procedures.

The N.D. National Guard has provided a surveillance flight in Sioux County, Standing Rock Indian Reservation, for local, state and federal officials to assist in determining the impact of the snow volume and necessary recovery efforts.

A team of FEMA and Bureau of Indian Affairs representatives visited North Dakota's four Indian Reservations this past week to identify issues facing the tribes. The main issues identified included: heating fuel adequacy and pricing; emergency accessibility for all residents; and the financial impact of the storms.

The National Guard resumed snow removal operations that had been delayed by snow storms on January 22 and 23. The National Guard has 26 snow removal missions underway and is addressing requests for 14 additional missions. The 26 missions are staffed by 102 Army Guard, 16 Air Guard, 24 U.S. Air Force and six N.D. Department of Transportation (N.D. DOT) personnel. Equipment includes: 28 dozers, 28 tractor-trailers, 24 support

vehicles, 15 snow blowers, eight loaders, and one grader. The U.S. Air Force completed a snow removal mission in Sargent County.

The N.D. DOT also resumed snow removal support operations to counties, reassigning two snow blowers and one seven-ton snow plow to Cass, Foster and Griggs Counties.

The cities of Mott, New England and Regent have issued Disaster Declarations. To date, 52 counties, 30 cities and three Indian Reservations have issued declarations.

7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: No change from previous reports.
8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: No change from previous reports.
9. OTHER: The Annual Workshop conducted by the N.D. Division of Emergency Management has been postponed. The workshop had been scheduled for January 29-31, but was canceled because of the county-federal-state response necessary to address FEMA-1157-DR-ND (North Dakota Incident 97-003, winter storms and blizzard conditions statewide).

The N.D. Division of Emergency Management's Situation Reports and photos of snow removal efforts are posted on the Division's Internet home page. The address is: "<http://www.state.nd.us/dem>".

Raymond J. Staiger, Acting State Director